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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

13 February 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-29: YUGOSLAVIA

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.

2. Tito's regime will not be overthrown during 1951 by internal revolts, or by subversive activities, no matter how much such activities may be supported from across the border. Overt, armed, invasion will be required if the Soviet objective is to be accomplished.

3. The Yugoslav armed forces would now be capable of resisting full-scale invasion by ~~USSR~~ <sup>other</sup> armed forces for about one month if the defense were ~~concentrated~~ <sup>Withdrawn and</sup> in the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina and Montenegro. If not so concentrated, resistance by regular military forces would probably end within two weeks.

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4. Against invasion by the armies of the four neighboring Satellite powers (Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Albania), organized <sup>Yugoslav</sup> resistance could be expected to continue for about three months, but probably no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. In either case, guerrilla-type resistance would continue after the collapse of organized resistance.

5. If <sup>(substantial)</sup> Western military assistance, in the form of weapons and equipment which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units, were furnished several months before a Soviet bloc invasion (~~in order to give time for training of Yugoslav personnel in its use~~), it could considerably lengthen <sup>the</sup> period of <sup>Yugoslav</sup> resistance to a Soviet invasion, <sup>would be</sup> could make such an invasion <sup>would be</sup> more costly, and <sup>could permit</sup> could increase Yugoslav defensive capabilities <sup>to the point where they would be</sup> ~~able to successfully resist a Satellite invasion.~~

6. Indications of recent military build-up in the Satellite countries, (stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, etc.) <sup>(a great and recent increase in)</sup> all point to the fact that the Satellites ~~have greatly increased~~ <sup>their</sup> capabilities for military action, ~~and have done so recently.~~ <sup>These in-</sup> <sup>(launch such an attack,)</sup> <sup>against</sup> indications neither prove nor disprove an intention to ~~attack~~ Yugoslavia during 1951 <sup>Although they Satellites now</sup> <sup>have the</sup> capability for such an attack, <sup>its pos-</sup> <sup>(and such a)</sup> sibility cannot be overlooked,

7. There is no reason to believe that the USSR <sup>(solely)</sup> would run grave risks of precipitating World War III, ~~in order~~ to attain its objective of overthrowing Tito, <sup>(Soviet leaders)</sup> ~~They~~ can hardly fail to estimate that <sup>(a Soviet or Satellite)</sup> an invasion of Yugoslavia in strength would involve grave risks of war.

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8. If the <sup>Kremlin</sup>~~Soviets~~ for other reasons decide to accept grave risks of general war during 1951, or to precipitate such a war, <sup>it</sup>~~they~~ might well begin ~~it~~ by attacking Yugoslavia. The purpose of such an attack would be to remove the ~~potential flanking threat offered by a hostile Yugoslavia.~~

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DISCUSSION

SOVIET OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.

STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF TITO'S REGIME

2. ~~Judged by the standards properly applicable to a totalitarian state,~~  
T the Tito regime is stable. Internal security forces are large and efficient, and have dealt successfully with active opposition elements. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far conspicuously failed. ~~From~~ <sup>Available</sup> evidence, ~~it appears that there are~~ <sup>reveals</sup> no effective, organized opposition groups operating within the country, and no serious personal rivals to Tito himself.

3. Not only is the machinery of control thus undeniably effective, but the regime also enjoys considerable popular support. A majority of the Yugoslav population prefers it to the reestablishment of control by agents of the USSR. Tito's bold and successful stand in the face of mounting Soviet and Satellite pressure has appealed strongly to Yugoslav national pride. Even the long-standing national minority problems in the country are at a low point of intensity. The improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Western powers, and particularly with the <sup>US</sup> ~~United States~~, has met favorable popular response. ~~Show~~ <sup>Relaxation</sup> ~~down~~ of the program of agricultural collectivization, ~~relaxation~~ of political controls, and ~~the moderating~~ of the campaign against religion have also reduced tendencies toward popular dissatisfaction.

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4. Since his break with Moscow, Tito has faced severe economic problems, arising partly from the embargo which the Soviet orbit placed upon all trade with Yugoslavia, and more recently from crop failures within the country. *Tito has been fairly successful in* reorienting his trade westward, ~~the proof of his ability to deal with the Com-~~ *Yugoslav* ~~inform embargo,~~ while the assistance of Western countries has ~~eliminated~~ the worst danger of the food shortage. *Economic difficulties are not likely to cause* ~~any~~ serious internal *disorders.* ~~to the regime arising from economic difficulties.~~

5. There are, on the other hand, various weaknesses in the regime, some of which can be exploited by the USSR and its Satellites. Tito's break with the Cominform and his ensuing vigorous campaign against Cominform sympathizers in the Party hierarchy put severe strains upon the mechanisms of totalitarian control. A few of Tito's supporters, though seemingly loyal, may in fact be biding their time until an opportunity occurs for them to improve their fortunes at the expense of their leader. ~~Within the country,~~ *Moreover,* the scars of the *Communist* ~~revolution carried out by the Communists~~ after World War II have not healed. Nationalization of the economy, campaigns against religion, and the *development of* ~~development of~~ police state techniques were ~~widely resented~~ and were bitterly resented. Probably the majority of Yugoslavs are anti-Communist, even though they are pro-Tito under present circumstances.

6. Tito's freedom of action in dealing with various political problems is somewhat restricted by his *ambivalent* ~~ambivalent~~ ideological position. Any considerable retreat from Communist theory or practice, and any conspicuous associations with the Western powers, give substance to the Kremlin's contention that Tito is a traitor to Communism; if such developments were to go far enough, they might cost Tito the support of some of his more zealous Marxist followers, who

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are indispensable functionaries in his totalitarian regime. On the other hand, if he adheres too faithfully to Communist dogma, he alienates the Western powers, and antagonizes non-Communist elements within Yugoslavia, whose support is fundamental if national independence is to be maintained.

7. We believe that Tito's regime will continue to be strong enough to deal with all its internal difficulties, despite ~~the fact that the USSR~~ <sup>Stalin's</sup> and ~~the~~ <sup>Soviet</sup> Satellite ~~will make great~~ efforts to exploit them. Even in the event of invasion, the great majority of the Yugoslavs would support Tito, and would faithfully carry out what resistance was militarily possible.

#### MILITARY VULNERABILITY

8. Most of the peripheral areas along Yugoslavia's extended frontiers are highly vulnerable to Satellite invasion. Northwestern Yugoslavia, including Slovenia and northern Croatia, could be quickly cut off from the rest of the country by a drive southward <sup>(from Hungary)</sup> through Zagreb and toward Fiume. The country north of the Sava River between Zagreb and the Danube could <sup>(also)</sup> be easily invaded at a number of points along the Hungarian frontier. The Danubian Plain north of Belgrade is especially vulnerable to armored attacks from either Hungary or Rumania. The Belgrade area, although partially protected on the north by the Danube, would be hard to defend against attacks across the Danubian Plain or from the south through the Morava River valley. Yugoslav Macedonia <sup>could</sup> ~~might~~ be cut off by attacks from Bulgaria and Albania directed toward Skoplje.

9. The large mountainous area which includes Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro is suitable for the organization and maintenance of a strong defense. However, this area would be dependent for outside supplies on several moderately good Adriatic Sea ports, access to which could be threatened by Albanian air and naval bases on the eastern shore of the Straits of Otranto.

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The mountainous defensive area would also be vulnerable to enemy penetrations from the directions of Zagreb and Fiume if such penetrations were undertaken before the organization of defensive positions. Several points along the Dalmatian coast might be vulnerable to amphibious attacks launched from Albanian bases.

10. ~~Logistically~~, the Yugoslav munitions industry could not meet the country's wartime requirements except in the production of light infantry weapons and small-arms ammunition. Most munitions production is centered around Belgrade and would be vulnerable to ground and air attack in the early stages of hostilities. The main ports of entry and transportation routes through which supplies from abroad might be obtained also are highly vulnerable. Rail and motor routes from Trieste and Fiume would, in the event of an attack from Hungary, probably be cut off at an early stage. Road and rail routes from Salonika are vulnerable to ground attack from Bulgaria and Albania. The only transportation facilities likely to remain in operation during extended hostilities are the ports, roads, and railways along the Dalmatian coast. Even these are of limited capacity and are vulnerable to air attack.

MEASURES SHORT OF WAR LIKELY TO BE APPLIED AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA

11. Since the break between Tito and the Kremlin, an economic blockade has been maintained by the Soviet orbit countries against Yugoslavia. Diplomatic relations have also been virtually suspended and Yugoslav diplomats have been harassed and intimidated by Cominform agents. Tito has been portrayed as a life-long "Fascist agent" and a willing tool of Western imperialists in a conspiracy to attack the Soviet Union. The resulting economic and diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia was for a time extremely dangerous to Tito's regime;

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if the support of his former Eastern associates had not been replaced in part by support from the Western powers, Tito might have collapsed. <sup>(This)</sup> <sup>(now)</sup> danger seems ~~to~~ to be over.

12. <sup>(be)</sup> <sup>(subversive)</sup> ~~Weakening of~~ <sup>Attempts will undoubtedly continue to</sup> Tito's regime by the infiltration of saboteurs, ~~and of~~ agents, ~~having the task of subversion, will doubtless continue to be attempted.~~

It is impossible to estimate how many such agents may cross the frontiers. <sup>(Moscow)</sup> Moscow may also have some slight success in spreading the fear of war and invasion among those parts of the Yugoslav population who dwell close to the vulnerable frontiers. <sup>(all)</sup> <sup>(the USSR)</sup> ~~though the Yugoslavs are not easily frightened,~~ <sup>It can also attempt</sup> to stage violent internal uprisings in Yugoslavia, linked with guerrilla raids from the neighboring Cominform countries. It can sponsor attempts to assassinate Tito. It can nourish any elements of Tito's own party <sup>with</sup> ~~who may cherish pro-~~ Cominform <sup>tendencies</sup> ~~opinions,~~ and who may hope for an opportunity to succeed to power.

13. We believe that none of the methods short of war which the Kremlin may use will ~~even~~ substantially weaken Tito's regime, and certainly will not overthrow it. Over a period of some three years the <sup>Kremlin has</sup> ~~Soviets have~~ already applied to Yugoslavia the strongest economic, political, and psychological pressures of which <sup>it is</sup> ~~they were~~ capable. Tito has not been appreciably weakened by them; indeed <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ has apparently strengthened his <sup>position</sup> ~~standing~~ with the Yugoslav people. <sup>his successful stand</sup> ~~against them.~~ He is thoroughly conversant with the tricks and techniques which may be used against him. The period of his greatest vulnerability to such methods is past. It will now require armed invasion to shake his regime.

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SOVIET AND SATELLITE ARMED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR AN ATTACK ON YUGOSLAVIA

14. Soviet forces presently disposed in countries adjacent to Yugoslavia consist of six line divisions -- two each in Austria, Hungary and Rumania -- and are insufficient by themselves for a successful invasion of Yugoslavia. Additional forces could, however, readily be drawn from the USSR to make up an adequate force for an invasion.

15. The armies of Albania, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria now total approximately 440,000 men, but, with partial mobilization over a period of at least 30 days, could be increased to 925,000 men organized in 47 line divisions, 11 combat brigades, and supporting independent regiments. Additional equipment would be required, but this could readily be supplied by the USSR by the end of April 1951. Satellite air forces total approximately 900 combat aircraft; their combat effectiveness is low. Satellite naval forces are negligible.

16. The fighting qualities of these forces would be at least good in comparison with Yugoslav forces, particularly in successful offensive operations. Bulgarian and Rumanian forces are the best trained and equipped of the four Satellite armies, but ~~they would~~ <sup>(Satellite forces would)</sup> all have the major advantage of extensive and timely Soviet logistical support for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

YUGOSLAV FORCES AVAILABLE FOR DEFENSE

17. The Yugoslav army has a current strength of approximately 275,000 men and could be expanded in 30 days to 600,000 men organized in 40 divisions. Yugoslavia has a further mobilization potential up to 1,000,000 men six months after commencing mobilization, but current and future availability of weapons would ~~permit~~ <sup>restrict</sup> ~~army~~ <sup>to</sup> additional units ~~only~~ with light infantry weapons and some field

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artillery. Yugoslav weapons are generally of good quality but heterogenous, with Soviet and German World War II models predominating. The outstanding weaknesses in equipment are in tanks, anti-tank weapons and anti-aircraft artillery. Yugoslav effectiveness would decline rapidly in the event of hostilities because of inability to replace material lost in combat. The Yugoslav air force totals approximately 650 planes, but is hampered by a shortage of spare parts. The Yugoslav navy is small and inefficient but is nevertheless capable of successfully opposing any Satellite naval <sup>operation</sup> ~~activity~~.

18. Yugoslav forces are capable of good combat performance, particularly if committed to the defense of the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina and Montenegro rather than the Danubian plain. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers had combat experience in World War II and <sup>(since then)</sup> have had ~~at least~~ fairly good training, ~~since that time~~.

19. Under present circumstances, only limited improvement can be expected in Yugoslav capabilities during 1951. The Yugoslavs are currently attempting to <sup>purchase</sup> ~~replace and supplement~~ arms and equipment from foreign sources, and some material, such as small arms and light artillery, is being manufactured locally.

Production is slow, however, and it will be some time before new equipment can be produced in significant quantities. <sup>↓</sup> Combat capabilities could be ~~consider-~~

<sup>(The acquisition of)</sup> ~~ably~~ <sup>further</sup> increased by certain items of equipment, such as anti-tank weapons and rocket launchers from the West, but <sup>only after</sup> ~~this improvement~~ would not be effective <sup>had been</sup> ~~until~~ Yugoslav personnel <sup>then</sup> ~~could be trained in the use of such equipment~~. Major assistance would be required to bring the Yugoslav air force to equality with the combined air forces of neighboring Satellites. Western military assistance in the form of weapons and equipment which could readily be integrated into

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*materially strengthen*  
Yugoslav units would ~~be a major factor in~~ Yugoslav defensive capabilities if the program were commenced several months before an invasion.

SOVIET AND SATELLITE MILITARY CAPABILITIES AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA

20. Soviet armed forces could successfully invade Yugoslavia, overcome organized resistance, and eventually bring guerrilla opposition under control. Under present circumstances, it is estimated that organized Yugoslav resistance could be destroyed within one month. The elimination of guerrilla opposition would take considerably longer and would depend on the extent of outside aid to the guerrillas and the scale of the Soviet effort. Timely Western aid could considerably lengthen the period of resistance to a Soviet invasion and, at the same time, make such an invasion ~~more~~ costly to the USSR.

21. Under present circumstances, the Yugoslav armed forces are incapable of successfully opposing an invasion by the combined forces of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Albania. It is estimated that organized resistance against this force would continue for about three months and probably no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. Guerrilla resistance would, of course, continue beyond that period. *Substantial* Western military assistance, if commenced several months prior to an invasion, could ~~enable~~ *enable* ~~sive capabilities to the point where~~ Yugoslavia ~~to defend itself~~ successfully against a combined Satellite invasion.

PROBABILITY OF SOVIET OR SATELLITE ATTACK ON YUGOSLAVIA DURING 1951

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*It is plain from the considerations presented above *(demonstrate)* that no small-*

*In assessing the probability of a Soviet-Satellite attack,*

scale or surreptitious operation ~~will be sufficient~~ <sup>could</sup> to overthrow Tito's regime; there must be full-scale invasion, by all the Satellite armies, or by some of them with the overt assistance of ~~USSR~~ <sup>Soviet</sup> armed forces. ~~Indeed, if Tito receives sufficient military equipment from the West, he can probably stand off any attack in which the USSR does not openly join.~~ <sup>major</sup> A decision to invade Yugoslavia ~~therefore~~ involves ~~a decision~~ <sup>the acceptance</sup> by the Kremlin ~~to accept~~ <sup>ob</sup> extreme risks of US intervention and perhaps of World War III. We do not believe that the Kremlin is willing to accept this risk for the sole purpose of attaining its objectives against Tito.

24. If, however, Moscow intends during 1951 to accept grave risks of World War III in pursuit of its general policy, or to precipitate such a war, there are some good reasons for starting the action in Yugoslavia. As the first step in a general European war, the Soviets might feel impelled to eliminate the potential flanking threat presented by a hostile Yugoslavia. By doing so they would also give themselves an improved strategic position for further action against Greece and in general against the Mediterranean region.

22. Indications from all the Satellite countries bordering Yugoslavia point unmistakably to a considerable military build-up. The numbers of the armed forces have been increased; various items of heavy Soviet-made equipment have recently been observed in the possession of Satellite forces; stockpiling of food and materials is taking place; rationing of gasoline and electricity has been introduced into most of the countries, emergency programs for industrial war production have been ~~instituted~~ <sup>instituted</sup>, and the movement of foreign diplomatic personnel has been more strictly confined. The USSR has ~~built up a~~ <sup>meanwhile laid the</sup> propaganda ~~groundwork to justify an~~ <sup>justification for attacking</sup> Tito. These and other indications definitely establish that the Satellites are or will be better ~~ready to attack~~ <sup>prepared for an</sup> (or) Yugoslavia ~~in~~

(in 1951)

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~~1951~~ than they were in 1950; they do not prove that the Satellites will in fact make such an attack. ~~Since~~ <sup>however, and</sup> The capability for a successful attack exists, its possibility cannot be <sup>overlooked.</sup> ~~left out of account, its probability cannot be assessed upon basis of the evidence available.~~

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